"A Road to Peace and Freedom"

Zecker, Robert

Published by Temple University Press

Zecker, Robert.  

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/64076

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2278659

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
During the four years or so that I’ve followed the International Workers Order (IWO) through various archives and newspaper files, I have benefited from the gracious assistance of many kind librarians, colleagues, and scholars. Research grants and conference funding from my home institution, Saint Francis Xavier University, enabled me to travel to chase the paper trail of the IWO. At St. FX, my colleagues in the Department of History have offered guidance and support as I bounced ideas and drafts of this project off their (mostly willing) ears. Our department administrative assistants, Margo Boyd and Joanne Bouchard, have been invaluable in helping me move this project along. Sheldon MacDonald, digital archivist at the Saint Francis Xavier University library, graciously provided digitized images for this book’s illustrations.

My thinking on race, social movements, and the American working class has benefited from the graduate training I received at the University of Pennsylvania’s Program in American Civilization. Although those graduate seminars are fading into the mists of time, I still gratefully acknowledge the scholars there who pushed my thinking on race and immigration, especially Ewa Morawska, Thomas J. Sugrue, Murray Murphey, and the late Michael B. Katz. It was in Dr. Katz’s Urban Studies pro-seminar, particularly, that questions of the salience of race to white ethnic Americans’ acculturation to the United States first began to gel for me. I am grateful to the intellectual rigor of my UPenn colleagues, particularly Russell A. Kazal and Rachel Batch. Russ and Rachel, as well as other colleagues, have helped me over the years to think rigorously about race, immigration, and much, much more.

Acknowledgments
The old joke has it that academia is the place where the battles are so fierce because the stakes are so low. But for whatever reason, I’ve been lucky to have found many truly generous people and avoided (mostly) academic steel-cage matches. Many thanks are due to David Roediger for his insights on race, the American left, and immigrant America. His commentary on an early draft of this manuscript helped me to sharpen and refine my arguments; his encouragement and friendship over the years has proved invaluable. Likewise, the comments and critiques offered by numerous colleagues on various stages of this project have pointed me toward sources, offered astute critiques, and in general strengthened my understanding of the American left and its civil-rights activism. In this respect, special thanks are extended to Rebecca Hill, Rachel Buff, John Enyeart, Barry Goldberg, Jennifer Young, Daniel Chard, Anthony DeStefanis, and Ian Rocksborough-Smith.

I am grateful, too, to the very kind e-mail correspondence I received from MaryLouise Patterson, who clarified some questions I had regarding the activism and career of her mother, Louise Thompson Patterson, particularly with regard to her role as vice president of the IWO, and her work in founding the Harlem Suitcase Theatre.

The assistance I received at many archives not only made this project possible, but made it a joyous odyssey, too. The archivists at Cornell University’s Kheel Center for Labor Management Documentation and Archives, especially Patrizia Sione and Melissa Holland, have my gratitude and admiration. The staff at New York University’s Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives are expert custodians of one of the preeminent collections of material on working-class and radical America. Wayne State University’s Walter P. Reuther Library contained a wealth of material on the IWO, and Erik Nordberg, Kristen Chinery, and the rest of the Reuther staff provided invaluable assistance to me. The archival collections at New York Public Library, particularly the Vito Marcantonio Papers, provided much useful material regarding the IWO, and the library’s periodicals included foreign-language newspapers that allowed me to retrace coverage of the IWO and other left-wing organizations. I am grateful, too, to the library’s Andrea Felder and Tal Nadan for help with providing a digitized illustration from the Marcantonio Papers. The staff at Columbia University’s Butler Library, the Wisconsin State Historical Society, and the University of Minnesota’s Immigration History Research Center are consummate professionals and assisted me in my research trips to these institutions. Emory University’s Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library is the repository of the papers of Louise Thompson Patterson, and I am most grateful for the expertise and courtesy of the staff there in helping me. Special thanks are extended to Courtney Chartier and Kathleen Shoemaker at Emory. Likewise, I am grateful to the expert assistance of the staff at the Library of Congress’ manuscript division, especially Jeff Flannery. I also take this oppor-
tunity to apologize to any other researchers at the Library of Congress who may have been distracted by Jeff and me debating the relative merits of the Philadelphia Phillies and New York Mets.

The comments of fellow panelists, chairs, and audience members at several conferences where I presented portions of this research helped me hone and refine my arguments, and pointed me toward both primary and secondary sources. The Working Class Studies Association conferences at Stony Brook, NY, and Washington, DC (2016, 2015); Organization of American Historians and Popular Culture Association conferences (2016); the North American Labor History Conference at Wayne State University (2015); and the American Studies Association and Canadian History Association conferences (2014) provided me opportunities to test some of my findings in collegial and intellectually rigorous settings. I was fortunate, too, to present papers on early findings regarding the IWO and American Slav Congress at Oxford University’s Mansfield College, where I attended a conference in critical issues of whiteness in July 2014, and at the University of Turku in Finland in October 2013 at a conference, “Travelling Whiteness.”

Scholars and colleagues who have offered particularly astute commentary at these conferences and beyond have my continuing gratitude and friendship. Samantha Schulz, Paula De Angelis, Simone Puff, Jarmila Rajas, Carolyn Podruchny, Todd Michney, Joe Varga, Tim Sheard, John Beck, Jack Metzgar, and Michael Zweig are especially acknowledged in this regard.

Many thanks to my editor at Temple University Press, Aaron Javsicas, for his thoughtful guidance of this project, as well as his patience when deadlines were (narrowly) missed. The expertise and professionalism of the Temple University Press team made this project a pleasurable one. Special thanks go out to Ann-Marie Anderson, Jamie Armstrong, Karen Baker, Gary Kramer, Nikki Miller, and Kate Nichols at Temple University Press. Many thanks, too, to the friends who responded to an informal, nonbinding online poll to help me decide between four potential covers designed by the Temple University Press art department, each cover more beautiful and striking than the last. I think we made the right choice.